

Worksheet 1. Are you ready for enterprise?

Use this worksheet to determine your "venture potential." Do you have the talent and infrastructure you'll need to build an enterprising nonprofit?

1. **Talent pool.** List anyone involved with your group -- board, former board, staff, active member, key volunteer -- with skills in the following areas:

- Sales:
- Provision of services/customer relations:
- Marketing, including communications, media, advertising:
- Graphic design:
- Financial management:
- Business planning:
- Fundraising, including grants and individual gifts:

Who are the best candidates to be your "enterprise advocate?"

2. **Leadership.** Does your board have entrepreneurial skills or inclinations? Do you have a plan for recruiting more board members with useful expertise or relationships?

<i>Excellent</i>		<i>Poor</i>		
5	4	3	2	1

Strengths of board, re: earned income:

Areas needing improvement:

3. **Outside help.** List any external resources available to help with your venture. The list could include books, libraries, other nonprofits, consultants, college classes, training programs, etc.

4. **Infrastructure.** Rate your management systems.

Financial systems. Can you keep accurate track of your finances? Do you produce monthly reports? If you were to start a venture, could your accounting system handle the billing, and keep track of payables and receivables?

<i>Excellent</i>					<i>Poor</i>
5	4	3	2	1	

Strengths of financial system:

Areas needing improvement:

Time management. Do you have a system for tracking people's time? How do you evaluate whether you're using staff and volunteer time effectively?

<i>Excellent</i>					<i>Poor</i>
5	4	3	2	1	

Strengths of time management system:

Areas needing improvement:

Data management. Does your database meet your needs? Do you schedule consistent staff or volunteer time for updates? If you were to start a venture, is the database designed to keep track of customers and prospective customers, ordering, and inventory?

<i>Excellent</i>					<i>Poor</i>
5	4	3	2	1	

Strengths of data management system:

Areas needing improvement:

5. **Current earned income projects.** What, if anything, are you selling now? List all goods and services that you currently offer *for a fee*.

Which ones are most popular? Why?

Which ones *net* the most money?

How much money do you generate each year from earned income? \$_____

What percentage of your budget is earned? _____%

What lessons have you learned from your sales program?

How have you applied those lessons to other aspects of your work?

Worksheet 2. Brainstorming your new venture

Guide your venture committee (see chapter 3) through a structured brainstorm using this worksheet. Your goal: identify as many potential earned income projects as you can. After you've completed this exercise -- and taken a few days off to gain perspective -- use worksheet 3 (page ____) to evaluate your ideas and select the project(s) with the best odds for success.

1. **What do you do well?** Write three things about your organization -- accomplishments, structure, the people involved, etc. -- that you're most proud of.
2. **What makes your group unique?** What do you *have* or what do you *do* that no one else has or does?
3. **What assets do you have -- products, services, expertise, "intellectual property" -- that someone might want?** For ideas, look at your answers to the first two questions.
4. **Given your mission and expertise, what additional goods and services could you develop?** (Another way of asking this question: how can you *repackage* what you already do, and what you already know, to serve more people or provide new benefits to the people you already serve?)

5. **Who might want what you have to offer?** Who are you trying to reach? List all current and potential audiences, customers, clients, etc.
6. **How can you reach your prospective customers?** Brainstorm as many promotional strategies as you can.
7. **Who are your potential partners?** Who can help you develop or market these goods and services?

Worksheet 3. Evaluating your earned income ideas

Use this form to rate each earned income idea for your organization, then compare scores to help you choose the most realistic option. This exercise will help you sort through the options, but *it is not intended to take the place of a formal feasibility study*, because:

- a) it's highly subjective
- b) the first and last criteria -- *passion* and *profitability* -- trump the others. If no one is passionate about the idea, or your research indicates that it's unlikely to be profitable, don't do it.

Earned income idea _____

Brief description:

1. **Passion.** Are most of the participants excited about this particular idea? Is anyone excited?

<i>Excellent</i>			<i>Poor</i>	
5	4	3	2	1

Notes:

2. **Relation to mission.** How does it fit with your current goals, programs, and skills? Does it build on something you already do well?

<i>Excellent</i>			<i>Poor</i>	
5	4	3	2	1

Notes:

3. **Appropriate management skills.** Does anyone within your group have the necessary skills to manage this type of venture? If not, can you recruit the right person?

<i>Excellent</i>			<i>Poor</i>	
5	4	3	2	1

Notes:

4. **Reasonable expectations.** Your immediate goal is to advance your mission and net a profit -- will this project do that? Or is it loaded down with too many other political and program goals?

<i>Excellent</i>				<i>Poor</i>	
5	4	3	2	1	

Notes:

5. **Market considerations.** Will anyone buy this product or service? Use the market research worksheets (page ____) to begin to answer this question.

<i>Excellent</i>				<i>Poor</i>	
5	4	3	2	1	

Notes:

6. **Uniqueness and specialization.** Does this project build on your unique organizational assets?

<i>Excellent</i>				<i>Poor</i>	
5	4	3	2	1	

Notes:

7. **Serves current customers.** Will this project help you to better serve the people who already know and support your work? These folks are the easiest to reach and engage, and the most likely to buy.

<i>Excellent</i>				<i>Poor</i>	
5	4	3	2	1	

Notes:

8. **Capital needs.** How much money will you need? For obvious reasons, inexpensive options enjoy a distinct advantage as you sort through the list.

<i>Excellent</i>				<i>Poor</i>	
5	4	3	2	1	

Notes:

9. **Profitability.** How much money do you stand to make? Will the net income justify your time and effort? To begin to answer this question, do your market research.

<i>Excellent</i>				<i>Poor</i>	
5	4	3	2	1	

Notes:

Total score _____

Passion + Profitability only _____